

VZCZCXRO4153

RR RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD

DE RUEHMO #1696/01 1031314

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 131314Z APR 07

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9244

INFO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 4734

RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC

RUEHYG/AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG 2367

RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 2049

RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1//

RHMFIUU/DTRA ALEX WASHINGTON DC//CT//

RHEFSNG/HMSNG WASHINGTON DC

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 001696

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EUR/RUS, OES/ETC, OES/STC, EB/TPP/ATP, EB/TPP/BTA  
INTERIOR PASS TO FWS (KOHL) and USGS/NWHC

USDA FOR OSEC/DAN CAINE, FAS FOR OSTIA/MACKE,

- WRIGHT, ROSENBLUM; OCRA/THOMAS,

- FLEMINGS; OA/PATRICK CLERKIN

HHS FOR SAWYER, STEIGER

FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS

SECDEF FOR OSD

VIENNA PASS APHIS/TANAKA, BRUSSELS PASS

- APHIS/FERNANDEZ

USDOC 3150/DAVID FULTON/MOLLY COSTA/ITA/CS/OIO/EUR

GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE

DEPARTMENT PASS USAID FOR GH/RCS/EE/ROSENBERG

CDC ATLANTA PASS SEPRL FOR DAVID SUAREZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: U.S.-RUSSIA WILDLIFE DISEASE CONFERENCE - BIRD FLU  
AND MORE

REF: MOSCOW 900

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**¶11. SUMMARY:** A full-day session on avian influenza drew a large and lively audience during the recent 2nd U.S.-Russia Conference on Wildlife Diseases, held in Moscow. The conference featured a 17-member USG delegation, whose presenters underscored the vital interactions between human health, wildlife health and commercial poultry and livestock. Russian participants welcomed the enhanced opportunity for bilateral connections, noting that Russian experts too often work in isolation. END SUMMARY

ONE WORLD, ONE HEALTH, ONE ENVIRONMENT

**¶12.** For many years the United States and Russia have exchanged information and data on the emergence, diagnosis, spread, treatment and pathology of wildlife diseases. The 2nd U.S.-Russia Conference on Wildlife Diseases, held at the main Botanical Garden in Moscow, March 12-15, attracted more than 100 Russian participants, primarily scientists and wildlife experts, but also some government officials, students, and representatives from environmental NGOs. Sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources (Rosprirodnadzor) Scientific Research Institute of Nature Protection's Wild Animal Health Center, the conference

agenda covered avian diseases including Avian Influenza and West Nile virus as well as diseases of terrestrial mammals and reptiles, amphibians, aquatic and marine ecosystems.

¶13. The 17-member U.S. delegation included experts from the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Parks Service and the Marine Mammal Center. In opening remarks, Susan Haseltine, USGS Associate Director for Biology, explained that since the first U.S.-Russia conference in November 1999, the U.S. focus has shifted from the study of an individual disease in individual species to considering wildlife health in the full ecological setting. Over the four-day conference, U.S. presenters frequently emphasized the theme "One World, One Health, One Environment," pointing out the vital interactions between wildlife health, human health, and commercial poultry and livestock.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

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¶14. Russian authorities recently (February 18-22) dealt with an outbreak of highly pathogenic A/H5N1 avian influenza (REFTEL and previous), so the full day session on AI drew a large crowd and sparked heated discussion. Contending that it made their country look "uncivilized," several Russian members of the audience passionately criticized last year's killing of wild birds in some regions of Russia and called for a political statement by conference attendees (the organizers demurred, saying that was not within their purview). Surprisingly, no one from the Russian agriculture ministry attended this portion of the conference, but after additional urging from the Russian coordinator, on the final day Sergey Yakolev, a poultry specialist with the Russian Veterinary Service,

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delivered a brief report on the government's successful actions in controlling the outbreak in February.

¶15. At a RIA Novosti press conference that attracted 16 journalists from 13 outlets (radio, print, internet), a joint U.S.-Russian group composed of Susan Haseltine and Leslie Dierauf (Director, USGS National Wildlife Health Center), Steven Kohl (Coordinator of bilateral FWS activities with Russia), Evgeniy Kuznetsov from the Wild Animal Health Center and Aleksandr Botvinkin of the State Medical Academy in Irkutsk, talked about the connections between wildlife diseases, public health and ecology. Noting that avian influenza was in the headlines, they explained that there were many other wildlife diseases of concern and environmental pressures on animal populations. Highlighting the conference goals, they stressed the value of bilateral cooperation and the importance of disease specialists sharing data, methods and personal field experience.

#### CONFERENCE RESULTS: CONNECTIONS

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¶16. The organizers actively sought participation from universities with agriculture, biology and veterinary programs, but were disappointed that relatively few students attended. Those who did show expressed frustration with university authorities for not recognizing the importance of students attending international meetings. In the conference wrap-up, one young woman said bitterly, "Don't depend on them (i.e., university administrators). They tell us nothing. Next time put up posters and more of us will be here!"

¶17. According to Evgeniy Kuznetsov, the two most important outcomes of the conference were increased U.S.-Russian interaction and forging connections among Russian experts themselves, who often work in isolation. In his role as President of the Wildlife Disease Association, Scott Wright

from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center offered to help Russia form a Russian section and internet subgroup with the Association. For many Russian attendees, receiving a copy of a Russian translation of 250 pages of the 2006 manual, "Disease Emergence and Resurgence: the Wildlife-Human Connection," was a valuable bonus. Participants enthusiastically endorsed holding another conference within the next two or three years, but the U.S. side noted the need for Russian financial support the next time around.

TAKE IT ON THE ROAD NEXT TIME?

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¶8. COMMENT: The information and data exchanged at the conference were characterized as crucial by virtually everyone who attended. However, several of the Russian participants pointed out the relative lack of representation from areas of the country other than the Moscow region. More than one person suggested to Kohl that the next conference be held in Siberia or the Far East to facilitate attendance by many people struggling with wildlife disease outbreaks on the ground and make it

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possible to include field demonstrations of disease prevention and treatment techniques. END COMMENT

¶9. Conference papers and presentations will be posted on the USGS website at [www.nwhc.usgs.gov](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov).

¶10. Additional information on U.S.-Russia wildlife cooperation is available on the FWS site at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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